

SECRET

100-16-1000  
JAN 16 1960  
SAMS and MIDAS

General Thomas S. Power  
Commander-in-Chief  
Strategic Air Command  
United States Air Force  
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Tommy

By letter of 20 April 1960, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has approved in principle the development program as defined in the Research and Development Plans, dated 15 January 1960, for DISCOVERER, SAMS and MIDAS. This approval provides for 35 DISCOVERER, 25 SAMS and 10 MIDAS vehicles. These R&D launches will be accomplished on the fastest schedule that is feasible. It is my belief that this represents an acceptable R&D program.

The operational program, both as to scope and timing, does not enjoy the same status. The operational plans were sent by the Secretary of Defense to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in February 1960 for comment. Since that time the Chief of Naval Operations has resubmitted his proposal for a Joint Military Astronautics Command. I feel that it is most important that these two JCS actions be kept separate. It is necessary, therefore, to dispose of the latter action first. This is being done.

There has been and continues to be strong opposition to the Operational Plans. Approval of the MIDAS plans is being delayed because of the doubt that has been expressed both openly and otherwise by DIRM in our ability to achieve necessary system reliability. The cost of operation of an operationally unreliable system can be exorbitant. There are no operational funds currently in the FY 1961 budget, although I have asked the Secretary of Defense and the Congress to approve our requests for these. As for SAMS, the DIRM and various scientific advisory groups believe our plan grandiose and unrealistic. As yet we have been unable to sail concurrently for our space programs. However, we are continuing to plug for this at every opportunity.

It appears that sufficient opposition exists to the present operational plans for SAMS to preclude early approval. The requirement at this time

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12065, Sec. 1-4.2

10 MAR 1971

SECRET

for construction of a 300,000 sq. ft. SOC/DPF at Offutt, before the system has demonstrated success and more firm design criteria is available, is most frequently questioned. It is clear that in order to accelerate an operational use of SAGE, it will be necessary to adopt some well organized interim plans. Therefore, I have directed ARDC, as team captain, to prepare a new plan for exploitation of any possible reconnaissance data which may result from the R&D tests. I understand your staff is participating with ARDC. Since you will be involved with this exploitation, I expect the new plan to be mutually acceptable.

Sincerely

White Gen USAF C/S

SECRET

1 AFDC Approval  
2 AFDC Coord  
3 AFCE Coord  
4 AFCS Signature

AFDC-AT

TITL

21 May 1960

Major General

225

SAGE and KIDS

Reference: Letter from General Power to General White

1. General Power expressed concern over the lack of progress in the SAGE development program and lack of approval for any operational program to date. In addition, the Under Secretary of the Air Force is withholding the approval for "Early Fix" facility at Omaha.
2. The proposed annex provides the current status of these programs and the further redirection of the operational plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

3. That the Chief of Staff sign the proposed reply.

S/ John F. Martin  
Colonel, USAF  
Deputy Asst for Advanced  
Technology Des/Sec

1 Atch

Proposed Ltr to Gen Power